

# **Who Cares? How Teachers Can Scaffold Children's Ability to Care: A Case for Picture Books**

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## **Abstract**

Academic inquiry has focused recently on how to create caring classrooms and school communities—that is, classrooms and school communities that encourage children to continue to develop caring feelings, thoughts, and behaviors, or to feel, think, and practice them anew. After reviewing research on caring and attachment, this article discusses how to structure a caring classroom and suggests that parents and teachers consider picture books as a means of helping young children learn to care for themselves, animals, and others. The article concludes with a discussion of criteria for assessing picture books and suggests some appropriate titles based on these criteria.

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## **Introduction**

*William is nervous about his first day of school. He is 5 years old and has entered kindergarten—a place he and his mother have visited several times. He is apprehensive, but excited. His teacher, Miss Stephanie, has worked with William and his mother to make sure that he is as comfortable as he can be in the school environment and with the other 5- and 6-year-olds in his class. When his mother leaves, he stands quietly surveying the classroom. Soon Miss Stephanie involves everyone in reading a story out loud, making William her page-turner and right-hand man. He seems to relax in his role as helper and listens to the story. Later, when the class is outside for recess, he runs to Miss Stephanie, visibly upset. "Miss Stephanie, Emma broke my eye!" Miss Stephanie gets down on William's level and checks for marks, but everything seems fine. She asks, "Did Emma hit you, William?" "She hit me on the head and broke my eye!" he says. Miss Stephanie, with William, finds Emma in the play yard and pulls her gently aside. "What happened with William, Emma?" she asks. Emma senses that she could be in trouble but says, "William looked scared so I patted him on the head." She reaches over and does just that, patting him near the eye. William smiles, understanding now that the outgoing girl wasn't trying to hurt him; she was trying to show that she cared. Because of Emma and William's nurturing families, supportive school environment, and caring teacher, they were able to understand what it means to engage in caring interactions in a public realm. It was an early lesson for both in how caring evolves from the family to the increasingly complex domain of public life.*

The ability to feel caring, to think caring thoughts about other persons or objects, and to behave in a caring manner may or may not be apparent in the children whom we teach. Likewise, to feel cared for, to think of oneself as worthy of being cared for, and to recognize and accept the caring behavior of others also may or may not be apparent. As illustrated in the preceding vignette, for Emma and William, the ability to give and receive caring behaviors is already fairly advanced as they enter kindergarten. Recently, academic inquiry has focused on how to create caring classrooms and school communities—that is, classrooms and school communities that encourage children to continue to develop caring feelings, thoughts, and behaviors, or to feel, think, and practice them anew. Some of that academic literature will be cited in this article. This new focus on caring is in part the product of national and world events that highlight the apparent dearth of caring among individuals and that raise complex questions: What is meant by caring? How do people develop the ability to care, the ability to become *care-full* ("full of care") rather than *care-less* (without care)? How do people decide who and what to care for? Who are the teachers? In other words, is the development of caring the province of home, religious

institutions, or schools? If caring is the business of teachers, how can we facilitate the development of caring in the children whom we teach?

We see these questions as critical ones, with significant implications for our world in both its private and public domains. These questions underlie our deep concerns about the devastating increase in violence in every sphere of our society, our concerns about the disturbing increase in the number of children and adults seemingly without conscience or the ability to care. Noddings (1992) writes that to care and be cared for are basic human needs but that not all of us learn to care for ourselves, for near and distant others, animals, plants, human-made objects, or ideas. Some "impoverished and dangerous people care for nothing; their lives are not directed by care or ultimate concern. Still others develop a distorted notion of care and do dreadful things in its name. The need to care in our culture is acute.... Not only is the need for caregiving great and rapidly growing, but the need for that special relation—caring—is felt most acutely" (p. xi).

To move toward answering questions related to caring, there are two central ideas that teachers should consider related to caring and its development:

- Caring, as a concept, requires definition.
- Caring behavior develops through interaction over time in our private and public domains.

## **What Is Caring?**

Rogers (1994) writes, "When we think of caring, we usually think of gentle smiles and warm hugs" (p. 33). Goldstein (1998), however, contends that such simplistic, albeit commonly held, definitions of caring position it entirely in the affective domain—a feeling, a personality trait, a temperament—rather than an intellectual act that has "deeply ethical, philosophical and experimental roots" (p. 245). Goldstein (1998, p. 259) and others (Jaggar, 1989; Freedman, 1990) assert that caring cannot be divorced from thought and is both an emotional and an intellectual act; caring is a deliberate moral and intellectual stance rather than simply a feeling.

Noddings (1984) describes caring not as an attribute of personality but as a relation. Caring is not something you are, but something you engage in, something you do with every interaction that provides an opportunity to enter into a caring or uncaring relation (p. 17). She claims that each caring encounter is an interaction between a person giving care and a person or object receiving care; as she describes it, the "one-caring" and the one or object "cared-for." The "one-caring" responds to the "cared-for" with full attention and receptivity to who or what the "cared-for" is and needs. Her concept exceeds empathy and describes a state of "feeling with" characterized not by projection but by reception, receiving the other into oneself, thereby seeing and feeling with the other (p. 30).

## **Development of Caring through Interaction**

We learn from Rogers (1994), Goldstein (1998), and Noddings (1984) that caring is developed through interaction. We believe that three kinds of interaction are necessary (McNamee, 1997; McNamee & Thompson, 1997):

- Interaction between feeling, thinking, and behavior.
- Interaction between the private and public domains as the developmental settings where caring might develop.
- Interaction between actually being cared for and being helped toward caring behavior.

Without these kinds of interaction, we do not believe that caring can be learned or, more specifically, that the teaching of the ability to care will succeed.

When does caring take root and begin to grow into a thinking/feeling self-system? When thinking about caring—whether for self or for the people, animals, plants, objects, and ideas that surround us in our private and public lives—it is easy to assume that it is developed at school age and primarily in school. It is also easy to assume that caring begins with what is, in essence, a morality-centered curriculum.

The capacity to care, however, takes root in infancy, beginning with caregiving by the "one-caring," perhaps even in pregnancy as a mother and (one hopes) a father anticipate caring for the expected baby. If caring does indeed begin before birth, we can also extend its burgeoning backward to the anticipation of the grandparents for the parents, the great-grandparents for the grandparents, etc.—longer ago than we can return to. Caring stems from physical caregiving, accompanied by psychological caregiving by nurturing others, and develops into self-nurturing and eventually into the ability to nurture others oneself. It develops into a feeling of caring enough about other people in our private or public domains to interact with them in a nurturing and cooperative manner—opening oneself to the other, giving full attention. In short, caring attitudes and behaviors develop through nurturing and sustaining attachment experiences throughout life.

## **Attachment**

### **The Beginning of Human Connection**

Attachment, as theory and praxis, is complicated and often the focus of debate, but experts agree upon some essentials. It is generally accepted that every animal or human baby is wired for attachment (Klein, 1995) and requires at least one nurturing caregiver to sustain its early development both physically and psychologically. By studying human babies, we have learned the difference between thriving physically and developing emotionally. Research has shown that physical care (feeding and cleaning) is not enough for survival; in fact, psychological care must also be present for a baby to thrive.

Good psychological care means that the caregiver must be physically and frequently present and be emotionally connected to the child—gentle in touch and general manner, communicative with eye contact and words, in tune with and responsive to a baby's expressions of need and desire. Good psychological care encourages the child's proximity and contact and affective responsiveness. It indicates a form of compliance—an easy cooperation between child and parent—in which a child obeys directions because she has become part of a secure relationship rather than because of the threat of negative consequences or discipline (Grossman & Grossman, 1981, pp. 696-697).

### **Separation/Individuation: Moving on from Beginning Attachment**

Separation/individuation is a psychological growth experience in which an individual differentiates the caregiver from the rest of her environment and explores this separate environment in larger and larger pieces, more and more publicly (Mahler, Pine, & Bergman, 1975; Kaplan, 1978). It necessitates moving away, first within the private domain of home and later in the public domains of school and neighborhood. The individuating person has conflicting feelings—adventurousness and confidence but also fright in the face of the largeness of the public domain and strangeness of increasing time spent there.

Whether or not children experience positive, nurturing attachment relationships, they move on to the second crucial, but often forgotten, aspect of attachment—separation/individuation. Good early attachment would become stifling if it were to continue throughout a child's development into adolescence. A developing autonomy or sense of self as an individual separate from the caregiver is also essential, but it is accompanied by a sense of loss for the idealized state from

which the individual has just emerged (Klein, 1975; Kavaler-Adler, 1992). To complete this attachment/separation cycle is a path not quick or easy to follow; it typically takes all of human childhood and adolescence and, for many, much of adulthood. Carol Gilligan (1982) writes that attachment and separation anchor the cycle of human life both biologically and psychologically (p. 151).

## **Integration of Attachment and Separation/Individuation**

Children who have been supported by one or more caregivers in experiencing both attachment and separation/individuation are likely to develop a sense of personal wholeness and integrity—a sense of what it *is to be me and no one else* in both private and public domains. Children can reconcile the need for both oneness with a caregiver and separation from that caregiver as they move increasingly into the nonfamily, public domain. Most children also become able to reconcile other opposites—accepting their own goodness and badness; feelings of love and hate; the goodness and badness of others; the love and hate feelings in others, including their caregivers (Kaplan, 1978). Each reconciliation brings with it some sense of loss of preceding modes of organizing the world (Kaplan, 1978; Mahler, Pine, & Bergman, 1975). This mourning experience is the necessary door to a full participation in the present and to higher levels of personal and social functioning in both private and public realms. It lessens the need for control and domination of other individuals and decreases vulnerability to others who may attempt to dominate or control a person throughout his or her later childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Well-nurtured, securely attached, and confidently separated children supported by a variety of people and experiences as they move into the community beyond their homes are children who are becoming concerned about, and often actively involved in, caring for themselves as well as the people, animals, plants, objects, and ideas with which they interact.

## **How Can We Structure A Caring School Community?**

While the promotion of caring feeling, thought, and behavior cannot be the sole responsibility of schools, we believe that it would be a mistake to neglect it in the school environment—especially today as school administrators are often forced to emphasize impersonal standardized testing and scripted content area programs. We believe that teachers and educators can model and teach caring by encouraging all children and teachers to feel, think, and interact *carefully* as they continue to develop a sense of self. Noddings (1995) offers the following rationale for including "themes of care" in our K-12 curricula. Themes of care may (1) expand students' cultural literacy, (2) help us connect standard subjects, (3) connect our students and our subjects to great existential questions, and (4) connect us person-to-person (p. 676).

Mercado (1993), familiar with Noddings' earlier work (1984, 1992) at the time of her own publication, agrees with Noddings' emphasis on caring and asserts that "the ethics of care"—the idea that caring is at the root of ethical decision making—"is as fundamental as promoting literacy and academic learning" (p. 80). And Stader (2001) believes that the threats of violence can only be reduced by creating caring communities.

## **Incorporating Caring into Our Classrooms**

Most teachers are aware that their students arrive each year with varied abilities to engage in caring relationships as either the caregiver or the cared-for. The question for the teacher is how to plan for and structure a caring classroom. Many writers have given attention to aspects of this problem. Martin (1992) has described a kind of classroom that she calls a "schoolhome"—a school that both educates and gives care (p. 27). Doyle and Doyle (2003) write about a school in which parents, students, and representatives from businesses were asked what they would like to see in a graduate. They report that the standard answer was a "caring, empathic, proficient student" (p. 259). Charney (1992, 2002) argues that the task of educating such

students is a daunting one—that many children today come to school less able to pay attention, less able to motivate themselves, "more lonely and depressed, more angry and unruly, more nervous and prone to worry, and more impulsive and aggressive" than in the past (p. 4). Raywid and Oshiyama (2000) write that children believe that there is a lack of caring in their schools and wish to have it return. Noddings submits that "[a]ll children must learn to care, and all must find an ultimate concern in some center of care" (1992, p. xii) and that "we should want more from our educational efforts than adequate academic achievement" (1995, p. 675), but she cautions that teachers will not achieve even "meager success unless our children believe that they themselves are cared for and learn to care for others" (pp. 675-676).

For teachers, this challenge has another, less-often-noted, aspect—teachers often feel overwhelmed and uncared for themselves, in part as a result of the pressure that they are under to produce results in the form of their students' scholastic achievement. Teachers, in turn, place pressure on children to perform academically. How can teachers cope with this pressure and still create caring classrooms that promote the development of caring in children? Noddings (1992) writes that there is no fixed formula for achieving caring: "It requires different behaviors from situation to situation and person to person. It sometimes calls for toughness, sometimes tenderness. Some situations require only a few minutes of attentive care; others require continuous effort over long periods of time" (pp. xi-xii). Noddings continues:

Parenting and teaching both require long periods of time—continuity in relations. Good parenting or teaching starts with the construction of trusting relationships and works continually to build on the foundation of trust. Schools...pay too little attention to the need for continuity of place, people, purpose, and curriculum. Most fundamental, of course, is purpose. If our main purpose as educators were to encourage the development of caring in our students, we would begin to look more attentively at the need for continuity in place, people, and curriculum. At the present time, it is obvious that our main purpose is not the moral one of producing caring people but, instead, a relentless—and, as it turns out, hapless—drive for academic adequacy.... The current emphasis on achievement may actually contribute to students' feeling that adults do not care for them. (p. xii)

Encouragingly, Doyle and Doyle (2003) report that a multitude of school environments are attempting to determine what a caring school community would look like and to cultivate such communities in their own schools.

## **Specific Proposals for Creating Caring Classrooms**

Several writers have concrete suggestions for educators seeking to create caring classrooms. Greenberg (2001) writes that nothing is more important in making a young student feel secure than the presence of a caring adult who, in an attempt to make students feel comfortable in the classroom, reaches out with warmth and understanding to every student every day. She asserts that teachers need to create many opportunities throughout the day for person-to-person encounters that involve listening and conversing—opportunities for children to move freely about the room, make choices, and connect with others. "Too much emphasis on 'time on task' precludes these opportunities," she observes. She recommends that time in the classroom be devoted to the cultivation of both academic and social/emotional development (p. 47). In particular, Greenberg recommends taking the time needed to deal with the details of teaching cooperation and helpfulness—supporting students when they do a kind thing, encouraging them to comfort others who are hurt or upset, encouraging students to talk to each other during group time (p. 50). She emphasizes the importance of comfort—all around the classroom and throughout the day (pp. 51-53).

DeVries and Zan (1994) describe "moral classrooms" as classrooms in which

the sociomoral atmosphere supports and promotes children's development...the entire network of interpersonal relations that make up a child's experience of school. This experience includes the child's relationship with the teacher, with other children, with academics, and with rules. (p. 7)

DeVries and Zan stress that they are not advocating a "program of indoctrination," such as lessons on character or a "value of the week" (p. 7). They describe a constructivist model according to which respect for others is continually practiced, permeating the entire network of interpersonal relations—all interactions between and among children and their caregivers/educators (p. 1). Further, they do not suggest that children should follow moral rules out of obedience to authority but rather that they should engage in prosocial behaviors such as sharing, helping, comforting, and politeness, while cultivating honesty, integrity, and generosity, without regard to what others are telling them to do. DeVries and Zan clarify that what they are describing is not a program of religious education (pp. 28-30); rather, they argue that "moral feelings have their origin in interpersonal relationships" and that interpersonal relations are the context for the child's "construction of the self" (p. 43). Their proposal is to create a classroom in which children develop moral characters while grappling with "interpersonal issues that are natural parts of their lives" (p. 41). For instance, instead of reading literature about characters making moral or immoral decisions, students can actually role-play and make the decisions themselves, then discuss their decision-making process as a class.

Charney (1992, 2002) describes how teachers can create caring classrooms—classrooms where children learn to care for themselves, other students, their environments, and their work. She writes about how to manage a classroom so that it will be nurturing, respectful, and full of learning—a classroom centered around teaching children to care (2002, p. 12) by striking a balance between the creation of self-control and community. She argues that this balance engenders "the capacity to care for oneself, for others, and for the world" (2002, p. 15). Charney suggests designing activities suitable for building community and cooperative learning and offers ideas for promoting meaningful conversation between teachers and students. A common example would be the introduction of classroom animals. Many teachers realize the value that classroom animals lend to the development of caring and community building. Children have to work together to ensure that the survival needs of these animals are met.

Doyle and Doyle (2003) advocate leading by modeling and describe a program that "not only teaches about caring but models caring through five critical activities":

1. **Establishing powerful policies for equity** through guarding against any action that challenges equity for any group.
2. **Empowering groups** through shared authority and decision making.
3. **Teaching caring in classrooms** through cooperative learning.
4. **Caring for students** through attending to their psychological and social well-being.
5. **Caring by students** through thinking, planning, implementing how students are involved in caring for others. (pp. 259-261)

Along the same lines, an article titled "How to Create a Caring Classroom" (2000) states that to create a cooperative, caring classroom, teachers need to help children cultivate the following qualities or relationships through activities: (1) friendship, (2) sharing, (3) respectfulness, (4) truthfulness, and (5) caring.

Employing more-specific methodology, Bluestein (2000) describes a caring classroom as an emotionally safe community and argues that this goal can be achieved by meeting students' needs for

- **success** through assessing what attitudes and behaviors students come in with, then

- backing up, revising, regrouping, moving ahead, and challenging each student;
- **belonging, dignity, and respect** through avoiding humiliation, sarcasm, ridicule, anger, impatience, and prejudice;
- **power, structure, and positivism** through setting limits but offering choices and following through consistently; and
- **recognition, attention, and emotional safety** through listening to students in need and supporting students' abilities to solve problems peacefully.

Bluestein offers a checklist for teachers to rate their ability to implement each of the above criteria ([http://www.janebluestein.com/hnd\\_ed6.html](http://www.janebluestein.com/hnd_ed6.html)).

Rombach (2001) focuses on classroom jobs as a time-honored means of increasing students' feelings of responsibility in a classroom community. What is unique in her approach is the use of nontraditional classroom jobs—what she calls "jobs that matter." These jobs include "friend," "listener," "helper," "mediator," and "advisor." She recommends appointing two or more students to each job to provide them with collaborative opportunities.

## **Using Picture Books to Stimulate the Development of Caring**

Letts (1997) recommends reading books about caring to children as a way of provoking discussion about how values such as kindness, concern, honesty, respect, and responsibility are part of the human condition: "...stories we read aloud give the whole class a common experience for the discussions that follow" (p. 38). She further states that reading stories about caring

- allows teachers to share stories that demonstrate caring,
- provides a common language and experience for class discussions that focus on the attributes of care,
- allows teachers to help students of all abilities to make their own connections with the story,
- suggests home activities that invite parents to continue the dialogue about caring behavior, and
- presents teachers with opportunities to model skills that are present when one cares for literature. (p. 40)

Mecca (1998) also recommends using stories to encourage caring behaviors in children. Mecca reasons that when "children are exposed to caring events and imitate what they see, they may develop a caring response" (p. 36). She suggests selecting books that (1) are at a student's developmental level; (2) have a well-developed plot; (3) are skillfully illustrated; (4) portray colorful and appealing characters; and (5) emphasize caring characters who help others, show compassion, consider others, share with others (objects, time opportunities), engage in fair play, do their share, keep promises, fulfill commitments, tell the truth, show respect, or offer love and affection (p. 36). We would add, based on Noddings' (1984, p. 30) work, a sixth criterion—books that (6) describe a caring interaction between one giving care ("one-caring") and the one receiving care ("cared-for"), that is, situations in which the "one-caring" opens herself to the one "cared-for" with full attention and with receptivity to his perspective and situation, receiving the other into herself, thereby seeing and feeling with the other (Figure 1).

### **Picture Book Selection Criteria**

- Picture books that encourage caring behavior
1. are at a child's developmental level;

2. have a well-developed plot;
3. are skillfully illustrated;
4. portray colorful and appealing characters;
5. emphasize caring characters who help others, show compassion, consider others, share with others (objects, time opportunities), engage in fair play, do their share, keep promises, fulfill commitments, tell the truth, show respect, or offer love and affection; and
6. describe a caring interaction between one giving care ("one-caring") and the one receiving care ("cared-for"), that is, situations in which the "one-caring" opens herself to the one "cared-for" with full attention and with receptivity to his perspective and situation, receiving the other into herself, thereby seeing and feeling with the other.

*Figure 1. Six criteria for selecting picture books that encourage caring behaviors in children based on Mecca (1995) and Noddings (1984).*

We have selected seven picture books from the range of books that focus on caring and meet the six criteria described above. Each of these books is based on one of Noddings' (1995) themes of care. Some of these books use the word "care" in some form; others are more subtle, showing a caring interaction without ever mentioning the word. Teachers are sure to know of many other favorite picture books that illustrate one or more of Noddings' themes of care. In addition to these books, we have listed five books that focus on caring in general; these can be assessed, also, using the above criteria. Since neither list is exhaustive, we invite readers to suggest additional titles to the journal.

## **Picture Books That Focus on Noddings' Themes of Care**

### **Caring for Oneself**

Moncure, Jane. (1991). *Caring for my body*. Mankato, MN: Child's World Press. (Ages: 4-8).

A young boy explains how he became a "wellasaurus" by taking good care of his body. The story explains how to become a member of the "Wellasaurus Club"—e.g., by getting a good night's sleep, dressing for the weather, and eating healthy foods.

### **Caring for Close Others**

Keats, Ezra Jack. (1998). *Peter's chair*. New York: Puffin. (Ages: 4-8).

Peter's identity as a family member is threatened by the birth of his baby sister. He tries to hide his favorite chair from his parents, whom he fears want to paint it pink for his sister, only to realize that he no longer can fit into it. In the end, Peter realizes that he cares about his sister, and he helps his father paint the chair.

### **Caring for Distant Others**

Leoni, Leo. (1973). *Swimmy*. New York: Dragonfly Books. (Ages: Preschool-6).

A little black fish, which swims in a school of red fish, discovers a way to protect them all from their natural enemies.

## Caring for Animals

Blackaby, Susan. (2003). *A dog for you: Caring for your dog*. Minneapolis, MN: Picture Window Books. (Ages: 4-8).

Before writing this how-to manual for dog owners, the author consulted veterinarians and a reading consultant. Written for very young children, the book discusses topics such as food and shelter, safety, and health check-ups. The book provides a variety of useful information, including a dictionary of terms and a list of books and Web sites.

## Caring for Plants

Vera, Paula. (1998). *Cuido mis plantas/I take care of my plants*. New York: Sigmar. (Ages: 4-8).

This book (in both English and Spanish) tells the story of one child and the plants that must be taken care of. The reader learns that plants need sunlight, fresh air, and water in order to grow. This book can be enjoyed as part of a caring unit as well as a science unit.

## Caring for Human-made Objects

Meiners, Cheri J. (2004). *Respect and take care of things*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit. (Ages: 4-8).

This picture book from the *Learning to Get Along* series focuses on showing respect for the larger world in which a child lives. It includes an activity guide for parents to complete with their children. In the book, one little girl is pictured cleaning her room, recycling, taking care of her toys, and playing carefully with a friend's toy. The book begins "I show respect when I take care of things." and ends with the message "I can take good care of the things I use, and respect all the things around me. When I do, everyone can enjoy them."

## Caring for Ideas

Osofsky, Audrey. (1992). *My buddy*. New York: Henry Holt. (Ages: 4-8).

The first part of this book focuses on a child with muscular dystrophy who is contemplating adopting a golden retriever that has been trained as a service dog. The rest of the book focuses on the education they receive together, their growing friendship, and how they help each other on a daily basis.

## Books That Focus on Caring in General

Crutcher, K., Hernandez, C., & Packman, J. (2000). *Character counts: Caring*. Ontario, Canada: Brighter Visions Publications. (Ages: 4-8).

This activity book from the *Character Counts* series features Karina the Kangaroo, a character whose name is from the Spanish word for caring. The book is designed to

be completed by parents and children together in 15-minute intervals. Activities include a short story, fill-in the blanks, coloring pages, and puzzles—each highlighting a certain kind of caring, such as using caring words, caring for pets, and helping people in need.

Johnson, Ward. (1984). *A tale from the Care Bears: Caring is what counts*. New York: Children's Press.

The Care Bears are on a mission in this story to save a little boy named Kevin from a mad scientist named Coldheart. Coldheart has invented a potion that leaves people unable to care. The Care Bears eventually succeed in saving Kevin from an uncaring life.

Meiners, Cheri J. (2003). *Understand and care*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit. (Ages: 4-8).

This picture book, another from the *Learning to Get Along* series, focuses on showing respect for the larger world around a child. The story aims to help a child understand and care by having him or her "watch how a person acts, remember when the child felt that way, and imagine how the child would feel if [he or she] were in this person's position." It includes an activity guide, and although the illustrations are helpful, some of the actions are fairly abstract and perhaps a little confusing for a young child—for example, "I can ask and listen. I can show I care."

Schuette, Sarah. (2004). *I am caring/Soy bondadosa*. Mankato, MN: Pebble Bilingual Books. (Ages: 4-8).

Written in English and Spanish, this book tells the story of a young girl who thinks about the needs of other people and animals. With the help of photographs, the reader sees the young girl interact with her friends, family, and animals.

Spelman, Cornelia Maude. (2002). *When I care about others*. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman. (Ages: 4-8).

A little bear learns that we need people to take care of us, and we need to take care of other people. The main lesson the little bear learns is "I imagine how others feel, and I treat others the way I want them to treat me." Among its virtues, this book has a simple message and is easy to follow.

## Conclusion

Can we as teachers promote the development of caring in children—the development of *care-full* people? Can we manage this task given the intense pressure that teachers feel to have their students meet academic goals? Is the integration of our own nature and experience such that we are, or can be, *care-full* people ourselves, creating and maintaining a caring classroom?

It seems apparent that children's experience of early and continued nurturing attachment relationships in both the private and public domain dramatically affect the development of caring and must precede any effort at teaching on our part. As children enter school, the environment is often not focused on caring relationships, possibly because administrators and teachers have not experienced early and continuing nurturing relationships themselves or possibly because current private and public pressures overwhelm their nurturing potential. As teachers live their own experiences and move through preservice and inservice programs, they may have experienced and continue to experience relationships and teaching that do not promote the development of the ability to care.

It remains for administrators, teachers, and teacher educators to integrate our own feelings,

thinking, and behavior so that we can continue to move forward in conceptualizing and promoting the continuing development of children and adults who are *care-full*, who are capable of connection, cooperation, and nurturing. We offer the notion that the ability to care must be developed throughout childhood in the attachment/separation/individuation of the child, continued throughout private and public life, and certainly continued in our schools and universities through teaching in caring classrooms, whether by modeling or through the use of literature designed to communicate the importance of caring.

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